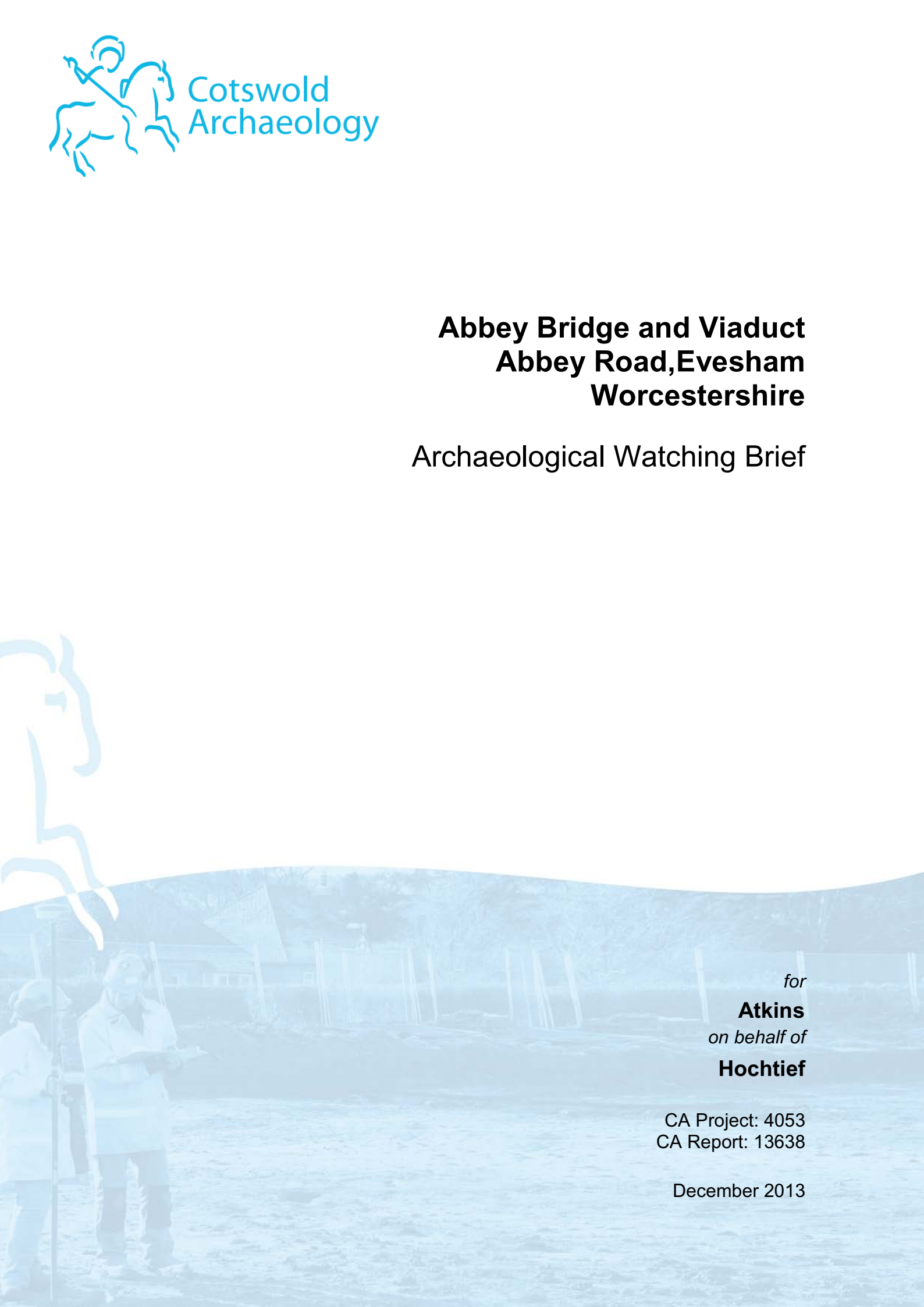


**Abbey Bridge and Viaduct
Abbey Road, Evesham
Worcestershire**

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
Atkins
on behalf of
Hochtief


CA Project: 4053
CA Report: 13638

December 2013

Abbey Bridge and Viaduct
Abbey Road, Evesham
Worcestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief

CA Project: 4053
CA Report: 13638

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date	12 December 2013
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date	12 December 2013
issue	01

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SUMMARY

Project Name: Abbey Bridge and Viaduct
Location: Abbey Road, Evesham, Worcestershire
NGR: SP 03392 43187
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 14 February, 29 and 30 April, 10 June and 12 November 2013
Planning Reference: 12/00039
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Worcestershire County Museum
Site Code: ABE 13

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with replacement of the existing Abbey Bridge and Viaduct at Abbey Road, Evesham, Worcestershire.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material was recovered.



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between February and November 2013 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Atkins, on behalf of Hochtief, at Abbey Bridge and Viaduct, Abbey Road, Evesham, Worcestershire (centred on NGR: SP 03392 43187; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil conditions A, B and C attached to planning consent granted by Worcestershire County Council (WCC) for the replacement of the Abbey Bridge and Viaduct with a new bridge and viaduct structures (WCC Planning ref: 12/00039) and considered of a watching brief during works to, and demolition of, the bridge and viaduct. The objective of the watching brief was to record all archaeological remains exposed during the development.
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a *Brief* issued by the Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service (WAAS 2012), the archaeological advisors to WCC, and with a subsequent detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2012) and approved by WCC acting on the advice of Mike Glyde, Historic Environment Planning Officer, WCC. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2009), the *Requirements and Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in Worcestershire* (WHEAS 2010), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991), and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006).

The site

- 1.3 Abbey Bridge lies to the south of the historic core of Evesham, Worcestershire. The bridge and its viaduct were built between 1925 and 1928 to provide the town with a new crossing over the River Avon. The area in which the bridge was placed has long been meadows on the floodplain with orchards to the north. On the south bank of the river lies the hamlet of Hampton, now effectively a suburb of Evesham. (Fig. 2).
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation of the Jurassic and Triassic Periods (BGS 2012). Within the Avon's river channel and its associated floodplain are superficial deposits of alluvium containing clay, silt, sand and gravel of the Quaternary Period. To the north of the river the Lias and Mudstone are overlain by sand and gravel deposits of

the Wasperton Sand And Gravel Member. To the south of the channel there are no superficial deposits. A geotechnical site investigation undertaken in 2010 identified alluvial deposits within the river floodplain, and these contained peat deposits in two locations (B04 AND B05), at a depth of 3.8m and 4.5m below the modern ground surface (Ian Farmer Associates 2010). Both boreholes lay immediately north of the current river channel. A subsequent geo-archaeological borehole survey was undertaken by ARCA. Preliminary assessment (ARCA 2013) identified peat and alluvial deposits with some palaeo-environmental potential and possible evidence for metalworking.

Archaeological background

- 1.5 The following background information has been compiled from a Heritage Assessment of the bridge and its environs (Atkins 2012) and a search of the Worcestershire Historic Environment Record (HER; ref. WSM 47430, 20 November 2012) The HER search confirmed that the baseline archaeological data compiled in 2009 for a previous desk-based assessment of the Abbey Bridge (Miller 2009), which was used by Atkins to inform the Heritage Assessment, was unchanged.
- 1.6 There is limited evidence of prehistoric activity in the immediate area. Two small assemblages of Mesolithic or Early Neolithic flint were found during excavations on the west side of Abbey Road and (on the opposite bank of the river) next to Hampton Cemetery. A single sherd from an Early Bronze Age food vessel and a small pit containing undated prehistoric pottery was found at the Hampton Cemetery site.
- 1.7 The excavations off Abbey Road also revealed a Late Bronze Age roundhouse, an earlier rectangular structure, and a scatter of pits of a type associated with grain storage (Mann 2008). These remains were interpreted as part of a larger Late Bronze Age settlement that had shifted its focus over time. Along with the excavated roundhouse, a number of cropmarks representative of possible ditched enclosures of probable Iron Age date have been noted in the Abbey Road area (Atkins 2012).
- 1.8 A small amount of Roman pottery has been found in the Abbey Road area and it has been conjectured that there may have been a Roman ford in this area (Miller 2009). There is more evidence for Roman activity to the south of the abbey although this appears to be largely represented by pottery and other material scattered on fields

during manuring. A cropmark on the east side of Abbey Road suggests the presence of a rectangular stone-founded building (WSM 29673), at least 22m long by 18m wide, of probable Roman or medieval date (Miller 2009).

- 1.9 Evesham Abbey was established in AD 706 and thrived throughout the Middle Ages. The land north of the river seems to have long remained in the ownership of the abbey and there is written evidence of the land north of Hampton being orchards in the medieval period. In the post-medieval period the land passed to private ownership and remained as meadow and orchards until the construction of the sewage farm and filter beds shown on the Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1886 to the west of Abbey Road. Whilst the sewage farm had substantially increased in size by 1924 the surrounding area remained open land as either meadows or orchards (Atkins 2012).
- 1.10 The OS map of 1938 is the first to show the new Abbey Road, viaduct and bridge. It also suggests the orchards had almost entirely vanished and the landscape was now far more open. A meadow to the north-east of the site had become a football ground, a precursor to the later parkland use and extensive landscaping of the meadows in this area up to the present day (Atkins 2012).

The Bridge

- 1.11 A programme of historic building recording to English Heritage Level 3 was undertaken on Abbey Bridge by Cotswold Archaeology in March 2013 (CA 2013). The bridge was designed in 1925 and opened on 29 March 1928. During the Second World War efforts were made to make the bridge defensible in the event of Axis attack. Concrete anti-tank barriers and sockets for steel posts were erected. There were also pillboxes on both sides of the south abutment, a sandbagged defence post at the north end of the bridge and an anti-tank gun emplacement on the west side of the viaduct (ibid.). Some of the sockets for the steel posts were exposed during resurfacing in the 1990s but may no longer survive (Miller 2009). A number of concrete cylinders, which may have had a defensive purpose, have been noted as being still *in situ* but were not located during the site visits by Atkins or CA. A concrete pile with a steel shoe at one end was noted lying under the viaduct during the site visit by CA and this may have been part of the anti-invasion defences, but could equally be related to construction or repair of the bridge itself. No evidence of such defences was seen *in situ*. Another block of concrete was seen buried level with the ground in the alluvium east of the viaduct (ibid.).

Archaeological objectives

- 1.12 The objectives of the archaeological watching brief were to:
- record the nature of the main stratigraphic units encountered and consider the depositional and post depositional processes evident on site
 - investigate and record exposed archaeological features/deposits in order to clarify their date, character, and significance and to provide a clear understanding of their chronology
 - characterise the nature of later prehistoric and Roman activity in the area
 - seek to identify and record remains relating to the World War II defences

Methodology

- 1.13 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2012). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising the excavation of a 1.5m by 1m trench (Trench 1), a 90m by 2.2m trench (Trench 2), a 40m by 6m trench (Trench 3) and approximately 14 trenches of varying depths and sizes excavated below the viaduct (collectively Trench 4). See Fig. 2 for location and extent.
- 1.14 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.15 The archive from the watching brief is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble and will be deposited with Worcestershire County Museum. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-7)

Trench 1

- 2.1 Trench 1 was excavated to a depth of 1.2m bpgl (below present ground level). The earliest deposit encountered was brown silty clay alluvium 101 which extended beyond the base of the trench. This was sealed by 0.3m of topsoil, 100.

Trench 2

- 2.2 Trench 2 was excavated to a depth of 0.1m bpgl and did not penetrate below topsoil 200

Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

- 2.3 Trench 3 was excavated to a depth of 1.2m bpgl. The earliest deposit encountered was brown silty clay alluvium 300, likely the same as 101, which extended beyond the base of the trench. This was sealed by 0.25m of topsoil, 300.

Trench 4 (figs 4 and 5)

- 2.4 Trench 4 was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.2m bpgl. The earliest deposit revealed was a brown silt alluvium 401, which was sealed by grey silt alluvium 400. No topsoil or subsoil was observed in this trench and is likely to have been removed during the construction of the bridge and by subsequent pedestrian traffic below the bridge.
- 2.5 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual scanning of spoil, no artefactual material was recovered.

The bridge deck

- 2.6 Observations were made during the removal of the bridge deck. Following the removal of the modern road surface the concrete bridge deck was cut into several short lengths and removed by crane (Figs 6 and 7). The reinforced concrete forming the deck was approximately 0.3m thick. No features of archaeological interest were observed cut into its surface.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above), the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. The absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that remains associated with prehistoric, Roman and medieval activity in the area either do not extend as far as or were not exposed by the development (perhaps being covered by the alluvial deposits identified), or that they may have been removed during the extensive landscaping of the area when it was developed into parkland in the late 20th century. Peat deposits recorded in 2010 and 2013 were

not encountered during the current works as the deepest groundworks only penetrated to 2.2m bpgl and the peat was identified at 4.2-4.7m bpgl (ARCA 2013). Similarly the possible metalworking evidence which was identified at 2.4m bpgl (ibid.) lay at a greater depth than the groundworks penetrated.

- 3.2 The absence of any WWII defences on the bridge deck appears to indicate that despite being previously exposed during resurfacing works during the 1990's they have subsequently been removed. Their absence would suggest they were only set in the road surface and not the concrete bridge deck itself. Further discussion on the bridge, viaduct and other potential WWII defences can be found in the historic building report (CA 2013).

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Tom Weavill and Jamie Wright. The report was written by Tom Weavill. The illustrations were prepared by Ian Atkins. The archive has been compiled by Tom Weavill, and prepared for deposition by Jon Hart. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

5. REFERENCES

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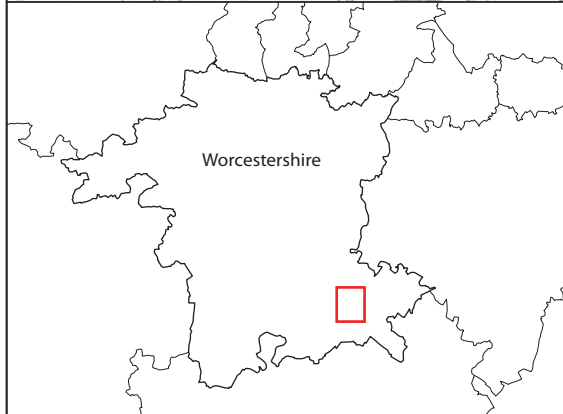


APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No.	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Grey silty clay	>1.5	>1	0.3	
1	101	Layer		Alluvium	Light grey brown silty clay	>1.5	>1	>0.9	
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Grey silty clay	>90	>2.2	>0.1	
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Grey silty clay	>40	>6	0.25	
3	301	Layer		Alluvium	Yellowish brown silty clay	>40	>6	>0.35	
4	400	Layer		Alluvium	Greyish brown clayey silt	>140	>13	1.65	
4	401	Layer		Alluvium	Brownish grey clayey silt	>140	>13	>0.5	

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Abbey Bridge and Viaduct, Abbey Road, Evesham, Worcestershire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with replacement of the existing Abbey Bridge and Viaduct at Abbey Road, Evesham, Worcestershire. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material was recovered.	
Project dates	14 February, 29 and 30 April, 10 June and 12 November 2013	
Project type	Watching brief	
Previous work	Historic building recording (CA 2013), Heritage assessment (Atkins 2012), Desk-based assessment (Miller 2009)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Abbey Bridge and Viaduct, Abbey Road, Evesham, Worcestershire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	12ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	SP 03392 43187	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Worcestershire Archives and Archaeology Service	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	Tom Weavill and Jamie Wright	
MONUMENT TYPE	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	None	None
Paper	Worcestershire County Museum	Trench sheets, digital photo registers
Digital	Worcestershire County Museum	Digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013 <i>Abbey Bridge and Viaduct, Abbey Road, Evesham, Worcestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report 13638		



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PROJECT TITLE
 Abbey Bridge and Viaduct, Abbey Road
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FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

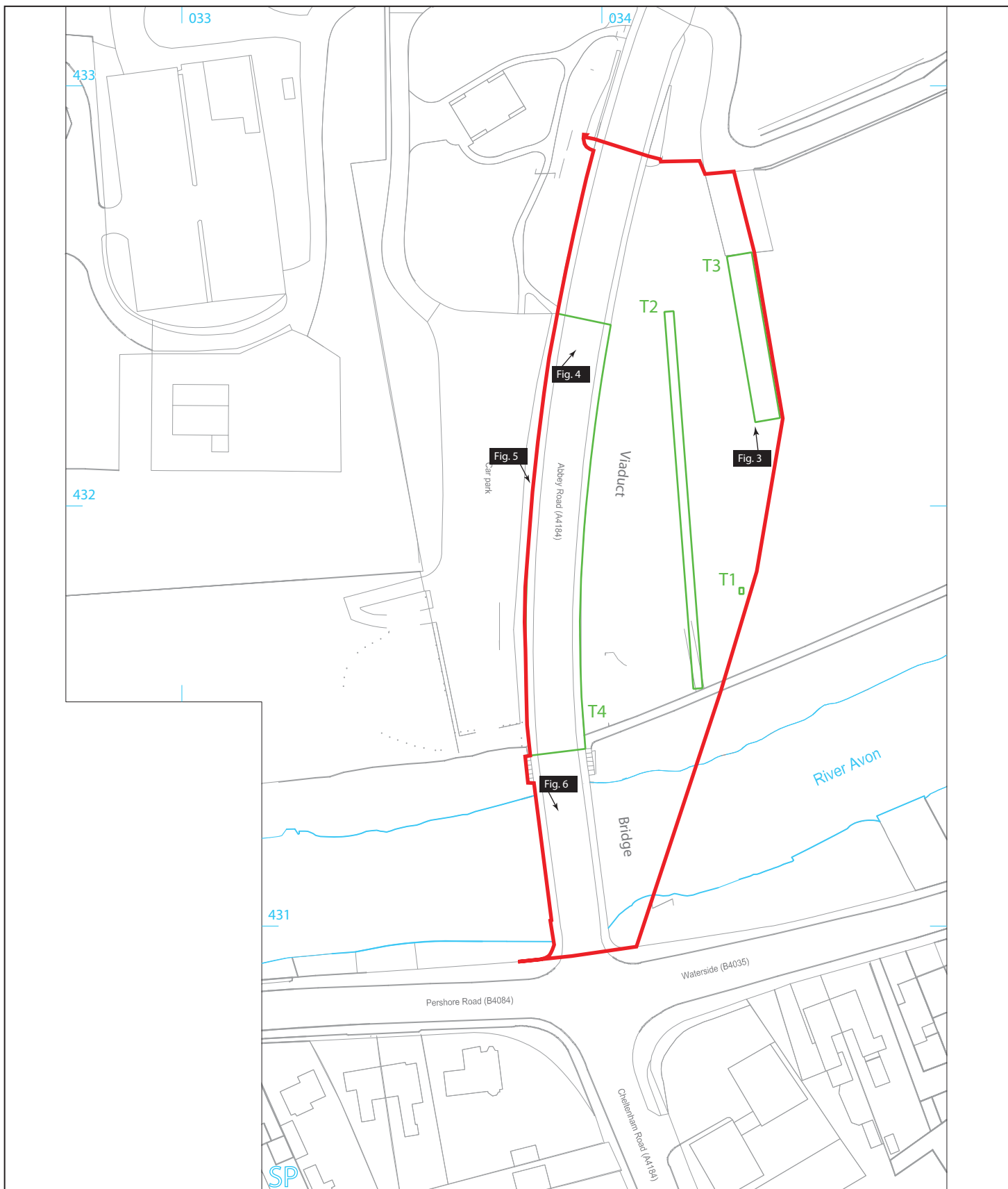





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FIGURE NO.

1



-  site
-  location of groundworks
-  direction of photograph



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FIGURE TITLE
 The site, showing location of
 groundworks



3



4

3 Trench 3

4 Groundworks below the viaduct



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FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

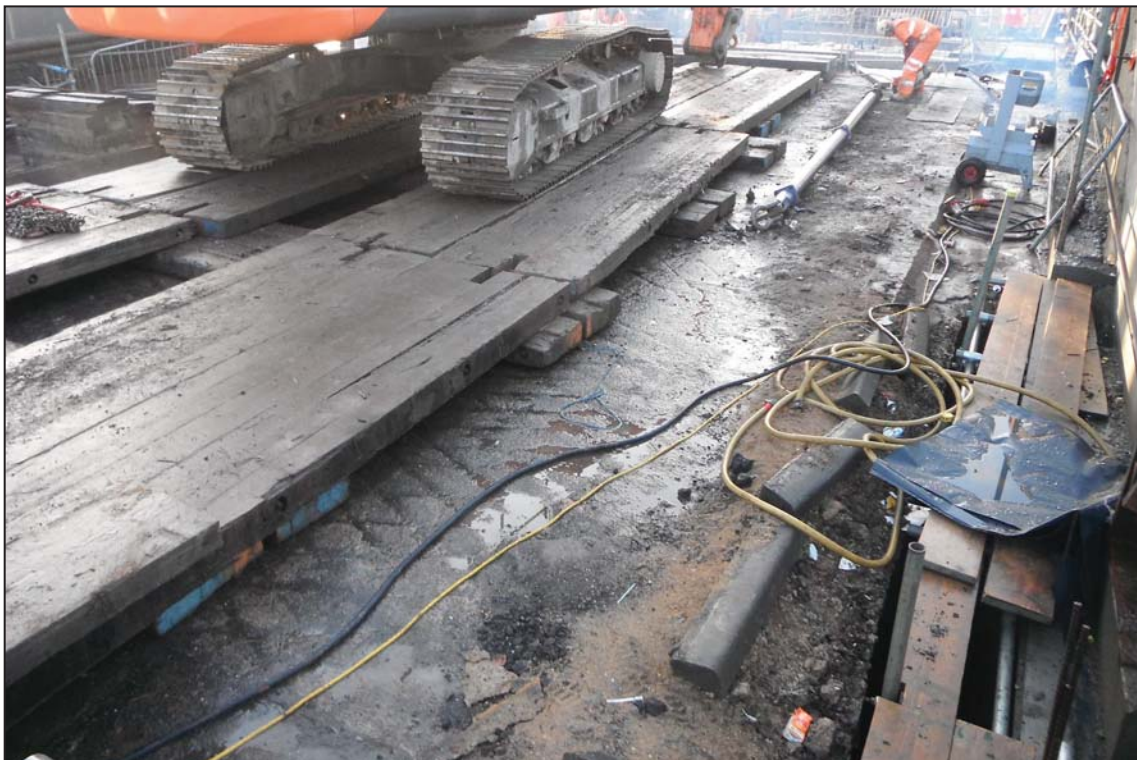
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FIGURE NO.

3 & 4



5



6

5 Groundworks below viaduct

6 1920s concrete bridge deck



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FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

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FIGURE NO.

5 & 6



7

7 1920s reinforced concrete from bridge deck



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**Abbey Bridge and Viaduct, Abbey Road
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FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

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FIGURE NO.

7



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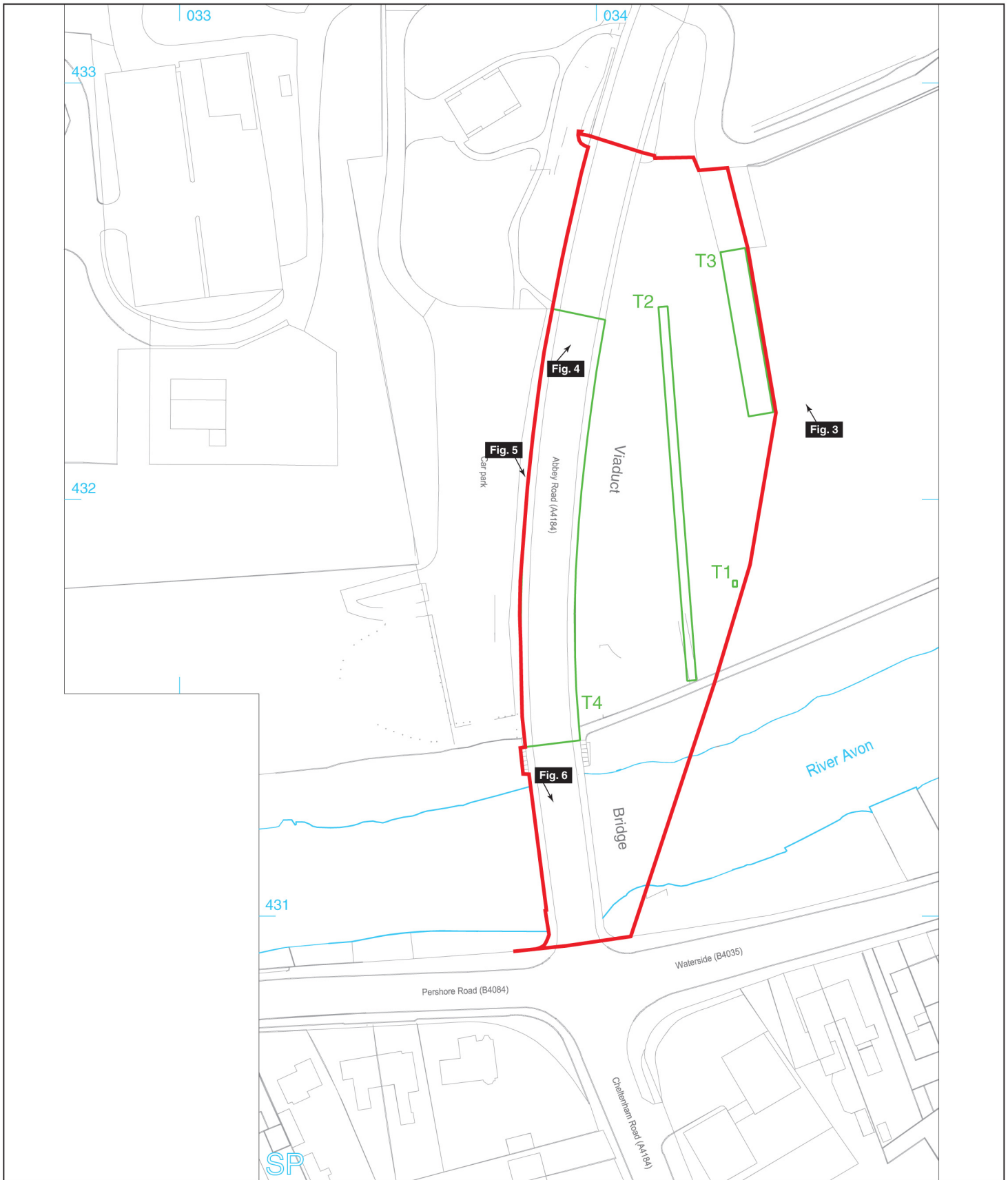
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PROJECT TITLE
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FIGURE TITLE
Site location plan

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- site
- location of groundworks
- direction of photograph

Fig. 3



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FIGURE TITLE

Site plan, showing location of
 groundworks



3



4

3 Trench 3

4 Groundworks below viaduct



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PROJECT TITLE

Abbey Bridge and Viaduct, Abbey Road
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FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

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FIGURE NO.

3 & 4



5



6

5 Groundworks below viaduct

6 Remaining 1920's concrete on bridge deck



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FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

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FIGURE NO.

5 & 6



7

7 1920's reinforced concrete removed from bridge deck



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PROJECT TITLE

**Abbey Bridge and Viaduct, Abbey Road
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FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

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FIGURE NO.

7